

Red Threads

An invisible red thread connects those who are destined to meet, regardless of place or circumstances. The thread may stretch or tangle but it will never break. - Chinese Proverb

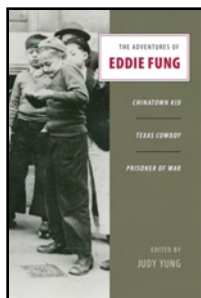
Newsletter for the Center for Asian American Studies

www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/aas/news/newsletter/red-threads.php

The Adventures of Eddie Fung:

Documenting Cultural History

The Center for Asian American Studies welcomed the 2008-2009 academic year with faculty, staff, and students with a reception and book talk by Eddie Fung, with his editor and wife, Dr. Judy Yung.



Eddie Fung is a second-generation Chinese American who was born and

raised in San Francisco Chinatown. He ran away to become a cowboy and by the age of eighteen, he had joined the National Guard in Texas and was sent to the Pacific War. Eddie Fung holds the unique distinction of being the only Chinese American soldier captured by the Japanese during World War II. He spent forty-two months as a prisoner of war working under brutal conditions on the Burma-Siam railroad, made famous by the film *The Bridge on the River Kwai*.

Like Eddie, Professor Emerita Judy Yung is also a second-generation Chinese American born and raised in San Francisco Chinatown. She worked as a librarian and journalist before becoming Professor of American Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where she taught courses in Asian American studies, women's history, oral history, and mixed race.

In *The Adventures of Eddie Fung: Chinatown Kid, Texas Cowboy, Prisoner of War* (University of Washington Press, 2007), Eddie recalls how his childhood in San Francisco's Chinatown and experiences as a Texas cowboy helped him endure forty-two months of captivity that shaped his later life.

Eddie's autobiography illustrates the importance of oral history narratives for capturing the lesser known human experiences of Asian Americans and demonstrates their

influence in shaping the broader fabric of American History. Collecting oral histories and stories is a vital aspect of cultural preservation. As Esther Chung, Neighborhood Liaison for the Austin History Center noted, "In order to preserve Asian American history, our stories and contributions must be documented and shared. Failure to do so may be construed as silence; and silence as apathy; and apathy as permission to dismiss our existence and experience altogether." The Adventures of Eddy Fung provides an inspiring example of staking this kind of claim in America.



Dr. Madeline Hsu, Mr. Eddie Fung, and Dr. Judy Yung

WHO WE ARE

Founded in 2000, The **Center for Asian American Studies** (CAAS) is the newest Ethnic Studies center at the University of Texas. We are an interdisciplinary program providing diverse programming promoting awareness of Asian Pacific American (APA) issues and community through a undergraduate major and minor degrees, an honors program, lectures, films, conferences, speakers series, discussion forums, and collaborative partnerships with community and campus organizations. CAAS seeks to develop and highlight transnational and hemispheric perspectives and narratives of Asians in the Americas.

To join CAAS's Listserv, email us at:
aas@austin.utexas.edu

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

MADELINE Y. HSU, PH.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Friends and Colleagues:

CAAS continued to expand in 2008-2009 on a number of fronts. Together with American Studies we successfully recruited A. Naomi Paik to fill our position in Critical Race and Legal Studies. From a strong field of applicants, her work on *Rightlessness: Stateless People and the Camp in Narratives of U.S. History, Culture, and Law* (Yale 2009) emerged as the project hewing most closely to our concerns with the broader infrastructural and ideological implications of Asian American experiences. Dr. Paik will be a postdoctoral fellow at UIUC during 2009-2010 and we look forward to welcoming her to Austin in fall 2010.

This year the ranks of Asian American Studies have grown with the arrival of Lok Siu, who is joining us as an associate professor of Anthropology from NYU. We are also hosting guests for the year in the persons of Dr. Eric Tang of UI-Chicago who will be affiliated with CAAS and the Warfield Center of African and African American Studies and Jason Chang, an affiliate of the Institute of Historical Studies and a Ph.D. candidate in Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley. We anticipate that these three colleagues will help to forge stronger intellectual and institutional linkages between CAAS and Latin American and African American Studies at UT.

Several highly productive partnerships have buoyed CAAS's programmatic offerings. We teamed with SAHELI, a local non-profit organization providing resources for Asian victims of domestic abuse, to offer the film series Cinema Truth to educate local communities about issues of gender and violence. We also co-sponsored the first ever Austin Asian American Film Festival in fall 2008 and look forward again to working with its director, Masashi Niwano for this year's version. Through the course *Vietnamese Americans: Culture and History* taught by anthropology Ph.D. candidate, Linda Ho Peche, AAS students worked with the Vietnamese American Heritage Foundation to collect oral histories which have been exhibited at the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum and the Austin History Center and are to be archived at the Center for American History. Together with the Warfield Center for African American Studies and the Center for Mexican American Studies, we co-organized the conference *American Crossroads* to explore comparative issues of race and activism.

We look forward to an equally active year in 2009-2010. In particular, in the fall semester we are co-hosting with the Fine Arts department a speaker series on Asian American art featuring Dr. Gordon Chang, Roger Shimomura, and Karin Higa among others and hosting the AAAS annual conference in April 2010. We invite your participation and hope to see you in Austin this coming year!



Madeline Y. Hsu, Ph.D.
 Director, Center for Asian American Studies
 Associate Professor, Department of History

Faculty Spotlight

Lok Siu, Associate Professor in Anthropology



In the Fall of 2009, the Center for Asian American Studies welcomes Lok Siu, Ph.D.. Dr. Siu joins us from New York University where she was an Associate Professor of Anthropology and Social and Cultural Analysis.

"My family and I are so excited to here. I'm looking forward to the start of a new school year and to meeting students and faculty at UT Austin. In the fall, I'll be doing research and writing on a new book manuscript that explores the transnational dimensions of Asian America. In the spring, please look out for my class, Cultural Politics of Food, which examines different aspects of power in everyday practices of food consumption and production." Dr. Lok Siu's enthusiasm mirrors the pleasure CAAS has for having her as part of the University of Texas at Austin's list of distinguished faculty.

She is the coeditor of *Memories of a Future Home: Diasporic Citizenship of Chinese in Panama* (Stanford University Press 2005) and *Asian Diasporas: New Formations, New*

Conceptions (Stanford, 2007), winner of the 2008 AAAS Book Award, sponsored by the Association for Asian American Studies. The essays included in *Asian Diasporas* look at the worldwide dispersal of Asian populations through the lens of diaspora. It brings together streams of inquiry and proposes a synthetic approach to examine various processes of migration and community formation on a global scale.

Dr. Lok Siu's research interests include: migration, diaspora, transnationalism, cultural citizenship, race and gender, Chinese diaspora, Central America and Panama.

Books: *Memories of a Future Home: Diasporic Citizenship of Chinese in Panama* (Stanford University Press 2005) and *Asian Diasporas: New Formations, New Conceptions* (Stanford University Press 2007).



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT**TONY VO, '05**

"[...] Being an Asian American Studies major helped define who I am and who I want to become."

AAS 2005 Graduate**Tony Vo**

Okay. To be up front, I sort of fell into Asian American Studies. No, it was not an accident by any means. Instead, I was in need of a history component and found out that Introduction to Asian American History fit the bill. This was in 2001 when I was a freshman at UT. In all honesty, that class was the best thing to ever happen to me. From the beginning, I was hooked. I graduated in 2005 with degrees in Asian American Studies and Psychology. And to boot, I even managed to do an honors thesis for AAS. Let that be a testament to how much Asian American Studies has changed my life and how grateful I am for it.

I have only fond memories of my time as an undergraduate and with the Center for Asian American Studies (CAAS). UT is a big school. I tried to make the most of my time at as an undergrad. I took Biology 301 and Government 301 like everyone else, but I managed to squeeze in some pretty fun classes like tennis, golf, ballroom, yoga and studio art. Have I mentioned that Liberal Arts is the way to go? Of all my classes, the ones I remember most fondly were my AAS classes. Cool students and even cooler professors. I joined when the program when it was a fledgling and had the benefit to see it grow alongside me. We were a small close-knit family and it was pretty awesome. I doubt you can really say that about most other majors.

Looking back, I can definitely say that being an Asian American Studies major helped define who I am and who I want to become. No, I am not just talking about my racial and ethnic identity. I am talking about who I want to be as a person. I hope I am not getting too abstract here. In 2008 I started the Masters' program at the School of social work here at UT. My love of social work stemmed from an AAS course taught by Dr. Rowena Fong, who at the time was the director of CAAS. To this day, I consider her my supreme and ultimate academic mentor.

Everything I do now is because of what I learned about Asian America and about myself. I am working towards a clinical degree and hope to one-day work within the Asian American community here in Austin. I am currently involved in elementary education and just finished an internship with a local non-profit organization that is based in public schools throughout the nation. I will be doing a lot of cultural competency and advocacy work for the Asian American community, so please wish me luck in my current and future endeavors!

And to those who are majoring, minoring, or contemplating AAS, trust me when I say it too will change your life. I promise you will be a better person for it. It is a rewarding degree program and the people and information to get along the way will stay with you forever.

2008-2009 CAAS SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

APA Organization Award Recipient

Chinese Student Association

Service Award Recipient

Eric Chen

Natural Sciences/Biology,
College of Natural Science

Natasha Raheja

Asian Cultures and Languages-
Masters Program, College of
Liberal Arts

Graduate Grant Award Recipient

Angela Ahlgren

Travel funding for dissertation tentatively titled, "Taiko as Performance: A Feminist Analysis of North American Taiko Across Performance Contexts".

Department of Theatre and
Dance, College of Fine Arts

Aurora Chang-Ross

Travel funding to attend American Educational Research Association.
Cultural Studies, College of
Education

Taofang Huang

Research fund for dissertation focusing on Asian American voting behavior.

Department of Government,
College of Liberal Arts

Linda Ho Peché

Research fund for dissertation, "Ancestors on the Move: Constructing Self, Subject and the Spirit of Vietnamese America".

Department of Anthropology,
College of Liberal Arts

Anju Reejsinghani

Traveling fund to present paper at Organization of American Historians (OAH), "Making Seattle an Asian City: Building and Rebuilding the Wing Luke Asian Museum, 1965-2008".

Department of History,
College of Liberal Arts

Tomoko Sakuma

Travel fund to present paper at the National Association of Ethnic Studies, "Negotiation of Ethnic Boundaries at a Japanese association in Brazil".

Department of Linguistics,
College of Liberal Arts

Isao Takei

Travel fund to present paper at the annual meeting of Population Association of America (PAA), "Demographic Characteristics of Third-Generation Asian Americans: Socioeconomic Attainments and Assimilation".

Department of Sociology,
College of Liberal Arts

AAS Major Spotlight

Donna Le

What factors were involved when you decided to become an AAS major?

It was an area of study completely different from my other major, biology, and I wanted to merge the two disciplines. By merging them, I found that they complemented perfectly with my future plans in public health. I find that understanding the cultural/ethnic/racial aspect is a very important component of public health. AAS

also enables me to have a broader perspective on everyday society.

How has being an AAS major reflected in your academic and personal life?

Academically, it gives me an outlet to think in an entirely different way about all the subjects I study. AAS has been a way for me to learn how I could connect my interest in aspects of why societies are the way they are to my interest in health. With the spectrum of classes offered in AAS, it gives me a well rounded perspective.

What personal benefits have you received by being an active member of your UT-Austin community?

I have been able to meet the leaders in the Asian American community who have shown me just how much of a difference and impact their ideas have achieved. This also gives me a group of people who know different aspects of the AAPI community to go to if I ever have questions.

In what ways have you been involved with the UT-Austin/Austin community or Global Asian/Asian American communities?

I have volunteered at different events within the Austin community and on the global level, I volunteered with a medical/dental mission in Viet Nam. The team of medical professionals and volunteers gave free medical/dental care and surgeries to those in the rural mountain villages of northern Viet Nam who cannot afford medical care otherwise. I was a medical interpreter/assistant for an American ENT surgeon. Because I was in the position of interpreting between the American surgeon and the Vietnamese doctors, I got to experience what it was like to mediate the two cultures. I realized that I couldn't simply translate their words, I had to mediate between the cultural differences and sometimes clashes to avoid misunderstandings. That was something that did not cross my mind until I found myself having to explain differences back and forth.

It was amazing to see how resilient these native Vietnamese were, especially the tribal people. We were working with a community of people who have received very little medical care in their life or, more often than not, have never received any. Those that were ill were very matter-of-fact about their condition, even when we could not help them simply because we didn't have the equipment or treatment that would have been easily obtained here in the states. That made most days incredibly frustrating. As many as we did help, give medicine to, operate on, hundreds of others had to be turned away. It was overall a humbling experience and an incredibly, emotionally difficult one.

If someone was interested in becoming active members of their community, what would you advise them to do or think about?

Depending on their interests, there are numerous organizations and so many ways to be active within the community. To narrow it down, pick an organization you're interested in and find out what you can do. You can also go to events within the community and will likely be able to find out more about organizations of interest.

The AAS center is also a great resource to help you, not just with finding organizations but can connect you with people across the community who could help you with specific interests.

If someone was interested in majoring/minoring in AAS, how would you advise them?

The courses will likely fulfill some requirements for other majors so it would not have to extend your semesters. It's completely worth an extra class or two (depending on major or minor) to learn and discuss the topics offered in AAS classes. Especially if your other major is one that has large classes, the AAS classes are small and almost always involves class discussions. It's a major that you can really become involved in and have a hands-on experience with.



Donna Le, far left corner, assisting medical professionals in an OR in Vietnam.

Spring 2009 Conference

**American Crossroads:
Migration, Communities,
& Race**

Our conceptual approaches to racialized communities have often echoed America's segregated past to develop as separate silos of data collection and analysis. Just as segregation--whether ideologically, legally, institutionally, or culturally--was rife with seepages, so too should our scholarship seek to capture the muddled and hybrid nature of race and migration in the United States.

Our spring conference theme converged on questions of agency, communities, and ideology to explore how individuals and groups of color engaged with and transformed structures of ideas concerning racial difference through their efforts to claim spaces in the landscape of American life. The conference aimed to explore how their struggles for resources and recognition brought these often disparate ethnic groups to share common ground. CAAS in conjunction with the Center for Mexican American Studies, the John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies, Institute for Historical Studies, College of Liberal Arts, Thematic Initiatives and Community Engagement-DDCE, and the Donald D. Harrington Fellows Program, convened scholars of race, activism, and migration to explore comparative trajectories of racialization and community building among Asian, African, and Latino Americans.

Questions and discussions regarding research problems across ethnic divides to advance our understanding of the coalitions, conflicts, and intersections that distinguish and yet entwine these groups were addressed. Our three panels focused on urban communities, activism, and racial discourses. The conference included a screening of Judy Tzu-Chun Wu's *The Takeover*, a short film which offered a personal perspective on a series of multi-racial student protests at Stanford University during the 1988-89 school year that led to the founding of the Center for Comparative Race and Ethnicity. Themes within the narrative included digital storytelling, historical memory, and social activism.



Eiichiro Azuma, Ph.D.
University of Pennsylvania

We were delighted to welcome a diverse group of leading scholars to Austin such as Fred Ho (Jazz Musician, Activist, Independent Scholar), Scott Kurashige (University of Michigan), Daryl Maeda (University of Colorado), Katherine McKittrick (Queen's University), Eric Tang (University of Illinois at Chicago), Judy Tzu-Chun Wu (OSU-Columbus), Caroline Yang (Wesleyan University), and Lisa Yun (SUNY in Binghamton). University of Texas at Austin participants included Irene Garza (American Studies), Julia H. Lee (English), Nestor Rodriguez (Sociology), Sharmila Rudrappa (Sociology),

CAAS would like to thank in particular Eiichiro Azuma, keynote speaker and the 2008-2009 Donald D. Harrington Fellow Recipient, for their contribution to the success of this conference.

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2010 ANNUAL AAAS CONFERENCE APRIL 7-11, 2010

The Association for Asian American Studies was founded in 1979 for the purpose of advancing the highest professional standard of excellence in teaching and research in the field of Asian American Studies; promoting better understanding and closer ties between and among various sub-components within Asian American Studies: Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Hawai'ian, Southeast Asian, South Asian, Pacific Islander, and other groups. AAAS sponsors professional activities to facilitate increased communication and scholarly exchange among teachers, researchers, and students in the field of Asian American Studies. The organization advocates and represents the interests and welfare of Asian American Studies and Asian Americans. AAAS is also founded for the purpose of educating American society about the history and aspirations of Asian American ethnic minorities.

Emergent Cartographies: Asian American Studies in the Twenty-first Century

As host for the 2010 Association for Asian American Studies Annual Conference, Austin is lodged squarely between the east and west coasts and abutting Mexico. How might this location inspire us to re-inscribe the terrain of Asian American Studies to capture twenty-first century realities and subjectivities? For example, to the surprise of most, Texas now holds the third highest population of Asian Americans, surpassing even Hawai'i, Illinois, and New Jersey. Journeying away from the traditional AAS strongholds on the coasts and Hawai'i suggests the urgency of regional perspectives reflecting newer, post 1965 populations and communities that may fragment the field between its oldest and newest parts. We argue that a process of dismantling is necessary so that a twenty-first century vision of Asian American Studies might be reassembled from its many messy and morphing parts.

From its origins in the civil rights era, Asian American Studies has been an emergent project intellectually and institutionally. It tracks the growth and evolution of a highly heterogeneous population constantly shifting in location, arrival narratives, socioeconomic class, cultural formations, political

identifications, and demography. UT Austin presents opportunities to highlight these transformations, as well as continuities, in student activism and program building, intersections with gender and sexuality studies, hemispheric conceptions of migration, transnational and diasporic practices, transformative communications technologies, rediscovered migration trajectories, economic crises, new sites of labor and employment, communities emerging from war and refugee flight, and teaching for non-Asian populations.

For instructions on submitting proposals, registration, and other conference information, please visit www.aaastudies.org/index.html.

Call for Papers

The interdisciplinary Association for Asian American Studies invites presentation proposals from the fields of literature, geography, sociology, political science, history, cultural studies, the applied social sciences, education, anthropology, media and film, ethnic studies, public policy, psychology, and communications. All proposals must be submitted on-line by Oct. 23, 2009.



CAAS Public Health Lecture Series, October 24, 2008

(above) Dr. Nhi Lieu, Dr. Sharmila Rudrappa (series organizer), Dr. Lisa Sun-Hee Park, & Dr. Madeline Hsu

Center for Asian American Studies

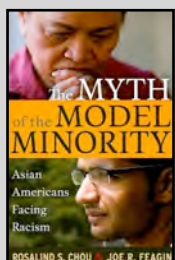
2008-2009 Programming



CAAS Open House
Featuring Eddie Fung
& Dr. Judy Yung



**AAS Major/Minor
Student Mixer**



**Book Reading: The Myth of the
Model Minority**
Featuring Co-Author: Rosalind S.
Chou, sociology Ph.D. candidate,
Texas A&M University



**Conference: American
Crossroads -Migration,
Communities, & Race**
Keynote: Dr. Eiichiro Azuma,
University of Pennsylvania



Public Health Lecture Series

Dr. Gilbert Gee, UCLA School of Public Health

♦ "Experiencing Racism, Experiencing Illness: How Racial Bias is Related to the Health of Asian Americans"



Dr. Lisa Sun-Hee Park, University of Minnesota

♦ "Enforcing Dependency: Immigrant Mothers & Health Care Access"



Dr. Sheba George, Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science

♦ "I Want to See a Real Nurse!": Indian Immigrant Nurses in U.S. Urban Safety-Net Hospitals and Implications for Health Disparities"



APA Lunch Discussions
Year Long Discussion Series Co-Sponsored with Counseling and Mental Health Center featuring psychologist Dr. Shalini Batra

- How Do You Define Yourself
- Forming Healthy Relationships in the APA Community
- Consciousness Raising and Activism
- What's On Your Plate?
- APA Women and Career/Leadership Development



CAAS Guest Lecture

Dr. Helen H. Jun, University of Illinois- Chicago

♦ "Reading Neoliberalism and Asian American Racialization in aka Don Bonus (1995) and Better Luck Tomorrow (2002)"



Cinema Truth

Year Long Film Screening
Co-Sponsored with SAHELI

- The Children we Sacrifice (2000)
- And Thereafter: A Korean "War Bride" in an Alien Land (2004)Holly (2007)
- Saving Face (2004)
- The Grace Lee Project (2007)
- East is East (1999)

GIFTS & DONATION FORM

We invite all individuals who are interested in Asian American issues to support our Center. Our goal is to increase awareness of Asian American issues by facilitating multidisciplinary teaching and research enabling students to become active members of their community. Contributors will allow our Center to develop new courses, provide scholarships for students, increase research opportunities, and sponsor university and public programs.

Name: _____

Mailing Address:

Email: _____

Phone Number: (_____) _____ - _____

Targeted Giving

(Please check any of the following)

_____ Student Scholarships

_____ Faculty Development

_____ Community Outreach

Please find enclosed check for:

_____ \$50 Supporter

_____ \$100 CAAS Family Member

_____ \$300 CAAS Leader Circle

_____ \$500 500 Club Member

_____ Other (please specify amount \$ _____)

*Thank You for your
contribution & continued
support!*

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